

September 6, 2006

TO: Members, State Board of Education

FROM: Lucille E. Davy, Acting Commissioner

SUBJECT: The List of Religious Holidays Permitting Pupil Absence From School

State law prohibits school districts from assessing a penalty to a student who is absent from school due to the observance of a religious holiday. N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14 through 16 and N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3(j) charge the Commissioner of Education, with the approval of the State Board of Education, with the responsibility of prescribing such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the purpose of the law. These responsibilities include preparing a list of religious holidays on which districts are required, at the request of the parent or guardian, to excuse a pupil for religious observance.

The district board of education has the right to add any bona fide religious holiday to the list for its own schools. Some parents might ask for an excused absence for their child on every day listed as a religious holiday for members of their faith, while others might request an excuse for only part or some of the days listed. Please note that there are times when the religious holidays of more than one faith will fall on the same day.

LED:IRB:pm

**Please note that the department will be presenting an amendment to this list for the State Board's consideration in October. This amendment will change the date of the Night of Power 9 (Laylatul Qadr) (Islamic) from September 19 to October 19.**

**REVISED  
RESOLUTION**

**The List of Religious Holidays Permitting Pupil Absence From School**

**WHEREAS**, according to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14 through 16 and N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3(j);, regarding pupil absence from school because of religious holidays, the Commissioner of Education, with the approval of the State Board of Education, is charged with the responsibility of prescribing such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the purpose of the law; and

**WHEREAS**, the law provides that:

1. Any pupil absent from school because of a religious holiday may not be deprived of any award or of eligibility or opportunity to compete for any award because of such absence;
2. Pupils who miss a test or examination because of absence on a religious holiday must be given the right to take an alternate test or examination;
3. To be entitled to the privileges set forth above, the pupil must present a written excuse signed by a parent or person standing in place of a parent;
4. Any absence because of a religious holiday must be recorded in the school register or in any group or class attendance record as an excused absence;
5. Such absence must NOT be recorded on any transcript or application or employment form or on any similar form; and
6. The Commissioner, with the approval of the State Board of Education, is required to:

- (a) prescribe such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this act; and

- (b) prepare a list of religious holidays on which it shall be mandatory to excuse a pupil. The list, however, is to be a minimum list. Boards of education, at their discretion, may add other days to the list for the schools of their districts; and

**WHEREAS**, the district board of education has the right to add any bona fide religious holiday to the list for its own schools; now therefore be it,

**RESOLVED** that the State Board of Education adopts the following list of religious holidays for the 2006-2007 school year:

<b>September 1</b>	Day of Ascension (Isra and Miraj) (Islamic)
<b>September 7</b>	First Consecration of the Guru Granth Sahib ji, the Sikh Scripture
<b>September 7</b>	His Holiness Sakya Trizin's birth date (Buddhist)
<b>September 14</b>	Ganesha Chaturthi (Hindu)
<b>September 14</b>	The Exaltation of the Holy Cross (Eastern, Greek, Russian Orthodox)
<b>September 19</b>	The Night of Power 9 (Laylatul Qadr) (Islamic)
<b>September 23</b>	Feast of Trumpets (World Wide Church of God, United Church of God and Global Church of God)
<b>September 23 - 24</b>	Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year)
<b>September 24</b>	Ramadan begins
<b>September 30 -</b>	Dussera (Hindu)
<b>October 2</b>	
<b>October 2</b>	Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) (Jewish)
<b>October 2</b>	Day of Atonement (World Wide Church of God, United Church of God and Global Church of God)
<b>October 7 – 8</b>	Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles) (Jewish)
<b>October 7 -13</b>	First Day through Seventh Day Feast of Tabernacles (World Wide Church of God, United Church of God and Global Church of God)
<b>October 14</b>	Last Great Day (World Wide Church of God, United Church of God and Global Church of God)
<b>October 14</b>	Shemini Atzeret (Eighth Day of Sukkot) (Jewish)
<b>October 15</b>	Simchat Torah (Rejoicing of the Law) (Jewish)
<b>October 20</b>	Birth of the Bab (Baha'i)
<b>October 20</b>	Joint-Sovereignty of Guru Granth and Guru Panth declared to Guide the Sikh people
<b>October 20</b>	Guruship of Guru Granth Sahib ji declared by 10 <sup>th</sup> Guru (Sikh)
<b>October 20 - 23</b>	Deepavali (Hindu)
<b>October 24</b>	Eid-ul-Fitr (Last Day of Ramadan) (Islamic)
<b>October 31</b>	Reformation Day (Protestant, Lutheran)
<b>November 1</b>	All Saints Day (Roman Catholic, Protestant & Lutheran)
<b>November 2</b>	All Souls Day (Roman Catholic)

<b>November 12</b>	Birth of the Baha'u'llah (Baha'i)
<b>November 15</b>	Guru Nanak Dev ji's birth date (Sikh)
<b>November 24</b>	Guru Tegh Bahadur dev ji's Martyrdom (Sikh)
<b>December 8</b>	Feast of the Immaculate Conception (Roman Catholic)
<b>December 8</b>	Bodhi Day (Buddhist)
<b>December 16</b>	First Day of Hanukkah (Jewish)
<b>December 25</b>	Christmas (Roman Catholic, Protestant, Eastern, Greek and Russian Orthodox)
<b>December 26</b>	Kwanzaa
<b>December 31</b>	Eid-ul-Adha (Day of Sacrifice) (Islamic)
<b>January 1</b>	New Year's Day
<b>January 5</b>	Guru Gobind Singh ji's birth date (Sikh)
<b>January 6</b>	Feast of the Epiphany (Roman Catholic, Eastern, Greek and Russian Orthodox)
<b>January 6</b>	Christmas (Armenian)
<b>January 14</b>	Makara Sankranti (Hindu)
<b>January 21</b>	Muharram (New Year) (Islamic)
<b>January 29</b>	Day of Ashurah (10 <sup>th</sup> Day) (Islamic)
<b>February 16</b>	Maha Shivaratri (Hindu)
<b>February 18</b>	New Year (Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese)
<b>February 19</b>	Bright Monday (Eastern, Greek and Russian Orthodox)
<b>February 20</b>	Shrove Tuesday
<b>February 21</b>	Ash Wednesday (Roman Catholic, Protestant)
<b>February 25</b>	Lent (Eastern Orthodox)
<b>March 4</b>	Holi (Hindu)
<b>March 4</b>	Purim (Jewish)
<b>March 14</b>	Sikh New Year/Holla Mohalla
<b>March 19</b>	Chandramana Yugadi
<b>March 21</b>	Feast of Naw-Ruz (Baha'i and Iranian New Year, also Persian New Year and Heritage Day)
<b>March 27</b>	Rama Navami (Hindu)
<b>March 30</b>	Chandramana Yugardi (Hindu)
<b>April 2</b>	Passover (World Wide Church of God, United Church of God and Global Church of God)
<b>April 2</b>	Lord's Evening Meal
<b>April 3</b>	First Day of Feast of Unleavened Bread or Passover (World Wide Church of God, United Church of God and Global Church of God)
<b>April 3 - 4</b>	First Two Days of Pesach (Passover) (Jewish)
<b>April 5</b>	Holy Thursday (Roman Catholic, Protestant, Lutheran, Eastern, Greek and Russian Orthodox)
<b>April 6</b>	Good Friday (Roman Catholic, Protestant, Lutheran, Eastern, Greek and Russian Orthodox)
<b>April 9</b>	Rama Navami (Hindu)
<b>April 9 - 10</b>	Last Two Days of Pesach (Passover) (Jewish)
<b>April 11 or 12</b>	Birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (Islamic)

<b>April 14</b>	Souramana Yugadi (Hindu)
<b>April 14</b>	Khalsa formation day and Vaisakhi
<b>April 21</b>	First Day of Ridvan (Baha'i)
<b>April 24</b>	Memorial Day (Armenian)
<b>April 25</b>	The 11 <sup>th</sup> Panchen Lama's birthday (Buddhist)
<b>May 2</b>	The 12 <sup>th</sup> Day of Ridvan (Baha'i)
<b>May 2</b>	Buddha's birthday (Buddhist)
<b>May 23</b>	Declaration of the Bab (Baha'i)
<b>May 23 – 24</b>	Shavuot (Feast of Weeks) 2 days (Jewish)
<b>May 25</b>	Ascension Day (Eastern Orthodox, Greek and Russian Orthodox, Roman Catholic & Protestant)
<b>May 27</b>	Day of Pentecost (World Wide Church of God, United Church of God and Global Church of God)
<b>May 29</b>	Ascension of Baha'u'llah (Baha'i)
<b>June 16</b>	Guru Arjun Dev ji's Martyrdom (Sikh)
<b>June 26</b>	His Holiness the 17 <sup>th</sup> Gyalawa Karmapa's (Ugyen Trinley Dorje) birth date (Buddhist)

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Lucille E. Davy, Acting Commissioner  
Acting Secretary, NJ State Board of Education

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Arnold G. Hyndman, Ph.D., President  
NJ State Board of Education